

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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SUMMER HINTS

Removing Summer's Green. Picnic time usually means grass stains on clothes. How to remove them? For washable fabrics, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends working a detergent into the stain and rinse. If stain remains, use a chlorine or sodium perborate bleach or hydrogen peroxide. But don't use a chlorine bleach on silks, wools, or special finishes. Read the labels on wash-and-wear fabrics to see if a chlorine bleach is safe to use. Treat grass stains on non-washable fabrics the same--but try alcohol first, if it's safe for the dye. Use one part alcohol to two parts water for stains on an acetate fabric. For all stain removal--remember--it's best to work from the wrong side of the fabric. For a detailed booklet on stain removal send 15 cents to Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. Ask for "Removing Stains From Fabrics" (G-62). Please include zip code.

Spray Poison Ivy Now. Now's the time to go after poison ivy, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists say. Spraying is effective now. After about mid-August, spraying is less effective because plants begin to go dormant. Normally two or more applications of herbicides such as a 2, 4, 5, -T, -2, 4-D combination, amitrole, silvex, or ammonium sulfamate are necessary to control sprouting poison ivy. The plants may take several weeks to die--and even then, keep your distance! Plants you think are dead sometimes revive after many months.

Lose Your Way, Keep Your Head. This year more people are expected to visit our National Forests than ever before. Occasionally, someone strays off the beaten path and gets that sinking feeling of being lost. If it happens to you--don't panic. Sit down. Relax. Think. How did you get where you are? Climb a tree or hill and look for landmarks. If you see a stream, follow its flow. It will most likely lead to some sign of civilization. Stay where you are if you're injured or exhausted, or if it's getting dark. Seek shelter. Clear an area and build a fire; fire lookouts might spot it. Chances of being found are best when you keep your head, remind U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service rangers.



Understanding Freezing. Stocking the freezer this summer? Freezers kept below 0 degrees Fahrenheit can keep your food for a long time--but no frozen food will maintain quality indefinitely. Thus, storing foods for longer than one year isn't recommended, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And some foods shouldn't even be held a month or two. It's not that the food becomes unfit--it just loses its quality. Frozen foods can be refrozen safely--as long as they still contain ice crystals or are below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. However, thawing and refreezing may lower eating quality. But whatever you do--remember--foods that have been frozen and thawed require the same care as foods that haven't been frozen.

FOOD FACTS

Good Peaches Needn't Blush. Look at the background color when you select peaches, U.S. Department of Agriculture specialists suggest. All varieties don't "blush" to the same degree. Select peaches with a yellow or creamy background, bright and fresh in appearance, firm but not hard to the touch. Buy the ripest unbruised peaches offered. You can ripen them at home by keeping them at room temperature. Then you can put them into the refrigerator until you're ready to use them. Avoid placing peaches on window sills or where strong sunlight falls. The sun will cause shriveling and possibly decay.

Pick the Plentifuls. Thanksgiving isn't here yet, but the turkeys are--and in great supply. So the U.S. Department of Agriculture suggests that turkeys be included in your July menus. Also plentiful this month are dry edible beans, fish fillets and steaks, lemons, limes and seasonal vegetables.

Cold Turkey Talk. Roast turkey in July and August? Why not? Cold turkey makes delicious sandwiches and salads to go with a cold beverage on a hot day. The Department of Agriculture reports turkey producers plan to exceed last year's record crop of 115.5 million birds by 5 to 7 percent this year. The large supply of turkeys makes this versatile food an economical choice for summer luncheons, picnics, dinners--hot or cold. They're wonderful in salads--but remember with the summer heat they're subject to bacterial growth that could cause food poisoning. Put the salad in a shallow pan or dish so it will cool rapidly and don't make too much at one time.

Turkey Thaw. Frozen turkeys can be safely thawed at room temperature if they are left in their plastic wraps and put in a closed paper bag, U.S. Department of Agriculture research shows. In ordinary thawing at room temperature, the outside of the bird may reach temperatures high enough to cause bacteria growth before the inside has thawed. The closed paper bag allows the turkey to thaw completely while keeping the outside surface temperature low enough for safety. Large birds (20-25 lbs.) should be allowed 16 hours thawing time; smaller ones (8-12 lbs.) about 12 hours. Turkeys should be refrigerated or cooked within 1 to 3 hours after thawing.

Mary Never Had Netted Lamb. Will you? U.S. consumers have never eaten as much lamb as other meat products. Sentiment for Mary's little lamb may have something to do with it--though that has not been proved. What has been proved is that consumers will buy netted lamb roasts--a new product, market tested with a high degree of success. Netted lamb roasts come in 3 forms: deboned legs, boneless shoulder, and Scotch roasts. Cotton net is used to hold the lean, boneless lamb meat together making the netted roasts easy to handle, slice and serve. They should be obtainable at most meat counters soon, U.S. Department of Agriculture marketing specialists say.

Meat Flavors. There's a world of difference between a piece of roast beef and a pork chop, a lamb chop, and a veal cutlet, but does the difference lie in the lean, and fat, the color or the texture? Meat flavor tests conducted by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists show that most people can't identify ground samples of these meats if the fat is taken out. Further tests indicate that lamb may be the only meat whose flavor is in the fat, although this may also be true to a lesser extent with pork. The role of beef fat to flavor is much less certain, but the scientists don't know as yet what other component of beef determines its taste.

HARVESTING RAIN

Rain Crop. Now what are scientists doing? They're harvesting rain--and consumers will eventually benefit from this harvest. During the past 5 years U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists have been experimenting with rain harvesting methods in Arizona by spreading rubber, plastic, metal foil, asphalt, and other materials on sloping desert land to catch the rain water and channel it into tanks where it can be used by livestock. A 1-inch rain produces about 6 gallons of water per square yard, or 25,000 gallons per acre. Cost of harvesting: about 80 cents per 1,000 gallons at present. (American consumers pay 20 cents per 1,000 gallons on the average, but in water-scarce areas farmers may pay as much as \$3 per 1,000 gallons to get water for livestock.)

PUBLICATIONS AND SLIDES

Flame-Resistant Fabrics. Flame-resistance treatments cannot prevent fires. But fabrics treated with flame-resistance solutions will reduce the danger of a blaze if a fire does occur. Specially-treated fabrics will not burst into flames--they only char or glow. This lessens the hazard of a fire resulting from children's clothing or curtains being too near a flame or open fireplace. U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers say the retardant solution can be applied easily and quickly in three ways--dipping, spraying or sprinkling. The chemicals can be purchased at most drug or grocery stores. For complete details send 5 cents to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. Ask for Leaflet No. 454, "Making Household Fabrics Flame Resistant." Please include zip code.

The Food We Eat. In the past one man out of four worked to produce food, but today one farm worker produces enough food for 39 others. Agriculture is our biggest industry employing 5.6 million workers. But it takes 10 to 11 million additional workers to operate the vast, efficient marketing system. To learn more about the food you eat, write for a free copy of "The Food We Eat," Miscellaneous Publication No. 870. Send a postcard to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250. Please include zip code.

America Is Beautiful. And if there's a better way to say it, it's in color. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has produced 52 color slides showing a scene of beauty from each State, plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The script that goes with the set tells how our nation can be kept beautiful and productive through the proper conservation of soil and water. Your next club program is ready made, and it can be repeated. School librarians, students, teachers, and conservationist groups will be especially interested in "America the Beautiful" slide set and script. It may be obtained for \$6.50 (check or money order) from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. If you prefer the same in film strips for \$6 order from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20011.

FOOD RESEARCH FINDINGS

Color Influences Egg Buyers. Would you believe that people buy eggs according to the color of the carton? A New York State Extension Service report notes that "color on and in egg cartons is a major problem in egg marketing." A survey of supermarket customers shows they prefer aqua-colored cartons, with pink a close second (over yellow and white). Apart from the degree of freshness, about the only difference in eggs is size. U.S. Department of Agriculture food grading indicates the quality of food and--in the case of eggs--size. Buying graded foods does not necessarily mean buying only the best or most expensive. Grades offer a choice of quality so the buyer can pick the most suitable item for a particular purpose--for example, top grades of eggs for poaching and frying, lower grades for cooking and baking.

Sweet As Apple Cider. You know the trouble with apple cider--about the time the family learns it is in the refrigerator to be consumed, it begins to taste vinegary. Cider will not ordinarily keep under refrigeration for more than 7 days. But this may soon be changed. Apple cider can be exposed to ultraviolet radiation by a simple process of pumping it over germicidal lamp tubes, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists report, and it will still taste fresh after 35 days under refrigeration.

For information about items in this issue, write: Editor of SERVICE, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.